



NOAA
Sea Grant Internacional
Latin America and Caribbean Program



June 2003 Update and Status Report

NOAA Research International Activities (IA), in conjunction with the University of Rhode Island Sea Grant and the Coastal Resources Center, has been actively working towards assessing the feasibility of adapting the Sea Grant model of applied research, extension and education to Latin America and the Caribbean. This project complements the U.S. State Department's "White Water to Blue Water" initiative by providing a proven model that allows countries in this region to manage watershed and marine ecosystem based resource issues. The Sea Grant model allows for effective and efficient use of the often-limited resources that are available in developing countries by building a long-term institutional structure that includes constituency driven research, extension, and education efforts. The domestic Sea Grant program consists of 30 programs and over 300 affiliated institutions. The network is eager to expand its scope by working with foreign partners and programs. Currently, Latin American partner universities include the University of Central America in Nicaragua and the University of Zamorano (Pan American School of Agriculture) in Honduras.

The activities associated with this project are being conducted over an 18-month timeframe. Progress and accomplishments as of June 2003 are summarized below:

- Interviewed over 60 individuals representing government ministries, universities, non-governmental organizations and private industry in the Gulf of Fonseca region to learn about the social, economic, environmental and political factors affecting marine and coastal resource use and management. Obtained feedback regarding their perspectives concerning the Sea Grant components of research, extension, and education and the potential benefits the model could provide when dealing with marine and coastal resource issues.
- Began assessing existing institutional capacity to address the issues that were identified by the above interviews.
- Received a letter of interest from the Government of El Salvador's Minister of Environment and the Minister of Agriculture expressing their interest in exploring their country's involvement in the regional Gulf of Fonseca Sea Grant project.
- Held a Sea Grant International session at the biennial Sea Grant Week in Galveston, Texas in April. Partners from Honduras, Nicaragua, Indonesia and Korea all presented talks detailing their experience utilizing the Sea Grant paradigm.
- Briefed the Sea Grant College Program's National Review Panel's International Advisory Committee on the status of the Sea Grant activities in Latin America. Updated the Sea Grant Association's Program Mission Committee (SGA/PMC) International Subcommittee on the activities in Latin America and obtained their feedback regarding mechanisms to involve the Sea Grant network.
- Briefed the U.S. State Department and NOAA Office of International Affairs on the Sea Grant International Project and identified ways to further integrate the activities into the "White Water to Blue Water" initiative.
- Continued the preparation and development of two background papers, one of which will provide a review of the existing experience of international research and extension systems and their effectiveness in developing countries while the other will examine the specific economic, political, environmental and social factors in two regions (the Gulf of Fonseca and coastal Ecuador) that will affect how the Sea Grant model needs to be adapted to these local contexts.
- Began assessing existing local and regional institutional capacity to address the issues that were identified in the above papers.

Upcoming Sea Grant Latin America activities are summarized below.

Event/Paper/Report	Description	Projected Date
Central America Country Analyses and Partnership Building	Continue to interact with U.S. Embassy, government ministries, universities and stakeholders to gain feedback regarding the Sea Grant program in Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador.	June/July 2003
Ecuador Country Analyses and Partnership Building	Meet with U.S. Embassy, government ministries, universities, and a broad range of stakeholders to disseminate information pertaining to the Sea Grant model and gain feedback.	June 2003
1 st Background Paper	Review of the experience of extension, research and education programs in developing countries.	August 31, 2003
Host-Country Roundtables	Share information with in-country partners and gain feedback on proper University institutions to partner with.	By October 31, 2003
2 nd Background Paper	An in-depth look at the social, economic, environmental and political factors affecting the Gulf of Fonseca and coastal Ecuador and the ways in which a Sea Grant program could address these issues.	By December 10, 2003
Widely distribute both Background Papers	In preparation for the Symposium.	December 15, 2003
Domestic Symposium	Discussions of both Background Papers.	January 2004
White Paper	Compilation of the two background papers, Host-country Roundtables and Domestic Symposium.	February 15, 2003
White Water to Blue Water Partnership Building Workshop	Highlight existing partnerships and develop new channels of cooperation in accord with regional network goal.	March 2004
Development of Implementation Plans and Funding mechanisms.	Begin obtaining financial commitments and develop program implementation plans for each country in conjunction with in-country partners.	Ongoing

NOAA Research International Activities and the National Sea Grant Office are both committed to developing beneficial partnerships with a wide range of involved governments, resource management agencies, universities, non-governmental organizations and private industries to ensure that the Sea Grant model is adapted and utilized in the most effective way to address coastal and marine resource issues. IA openly welcomes your feedback, comments and opinions regarding this initiative. Please contact:

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